

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10, 12, 14-26, 28, and 31-44 are pending in the application, of which all claims stand finally rejected.

STATEMENT UNDER 1.133(b)

Applicant would like to thank Examiner Swearingen for extending an interview to discuss the patentability of independent Claims 8 and 26 as well as dependant Claim 3. The arguments for patentability presented during the interview are included among the arguments presented below. Agreement on the allowability of the claims was not reached during the interview, as the Examiner wished to take additional time to consider the arguments.

35 USC 102(b): CLAIMS 1-8, 10, 12, 14-26, 28, and 31-44

CLAIM 1:

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, “a database relationally storing at least one old address and one new address.” As we understand the Examiner’s reading of Lee, the Switchboard address is the equivalent of the old address: “The old address in Lee is the address [of]... the Switchboard.” (page 2, paragraph 3, sentence 1 of the Final Office Action). Accepting The Examiner’s interpretation for sake of argument only, Lee does not disclose relationally storing the old address (Switchboard address) in a database.

Furthermore, there is no apparent purpose to modify Lee to relationally store the Switchboard address with a new address in the database, because there address of the Switchboard is constant for all new addresses in the database --- there is only one Switchboard address in Lee. To “relationally” store the single Switchboard address with one or more new addresses merely increases the size of the database without providing any additional functionality to the database. Therefore, for at least these reasons, Lee does not disclose all the elements of Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 1, as well as claims 2-7 and 42 which depend therefrom.

CLAIM 3:

Claim 3 depends from Claim 1, and adds that “the database relationally stores a plurality of old addresses and one new address.” As previously mentioned, according to the Examiner’s reading of Lee, the Switchboard address is the equivalent of the old address (page 2, paragraph 3, sentence 1 of the last Office action).

The Examiner also specifies that the changer can have a plurality of addresses saved in the system (Col. 6, lines 16-19 of Lee), but claim 3 recites a plurality of old addresses, which the Examiner identified as Switchboard addresses not changer addresses. Therefore, the Examiner’s rejection of Claim 3 is inconsistent with his reading of Lee in Claim 1, because the plurality of addresses described in Col. 6, lines 16-19 are **new** addresses (according to the Examiner’s reading), not **old** addresses. The old address according to Examiner’s reading is the Switchboard address, and Lee does not disclose that the Switchboard has or is capable of having a plurality of addresses. Therefore, Lee does not disclose a “database [that] relationally stores a plurality of old addresses and one new address.” Accordingly, for at least this additional reason, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 3 as well as claim 4 which depends therefrom.

CLAIM 8 and 26:

Independent claim 8 recites, *inter alia*, “wherein the disclosure judging means ... acquires the address disclosing condition of the registrant by searching the address data base with this old address.” The Examiner identified that the old address in Lee is the Switchboard address. There is no disclosure in Lee (nor apparent purpose that could be served) by searching an address database with the Switchboard address. For at least this reason, Lee does not disclose all the features of Claim 8. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent claim 8, as well as claims 12, 14-25, and 43 which depend therefrom.

Independent claim 26 recites, *inter alia*, “searching the data base with an old address of the registrant in the registration judging step.” As stated above with regard to claim 8, Lee does not disclose searching the database with an old (Switchboard) address of the registrant in the registration judging step. Therefore, Lee does not disclose all the features of Claim 26. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent claim 26, as well as claims 28, 31-41, and 44 which depend therefrom.

CLAIMS 17, 18, 34, and 35:

Claim 17 depends from Claim 8 and recites that “wherein the confirming means includes a disclosing condition registering means for receiving a confirmation result from the registrant and registering the inquirer in the disclosing condition as an inquirer to whom the address is disclosed or not disclosed.” Paragraph 0145 of the published application describes certain features of this claim:

When the address disclosing condition 17 is "Disclose new address instantly" (the numeral 28 in FIG. 2), the inquiry refusal list 18 is then checked in this embodiment, and only when the inquirers 5 are not registered in the inquiry refusal list 18, the new address 24 is disclosed unconditionally to all the inquirers 5 (steps S21, S22-1, and S22-2). In this case, the address disclosure judge 51 and the discloser 54 in the address inquiry system 1 display a screen shown in FIG. 26 in the inquirer terminal 6 and disclose the new address 24 of the changer 3 to the inquirer 5.

[0145] of 2002/0052971. Lee does not disclose a disclosing registering means in Col 7, lines 26-50. The registering means in Applicant’s invention allows the system to save the registrant’s decision as to whether to disclose the registrant’s address to the specific inquirer. In Lee, the registrant has the decision whether or not to reply to the sender, but the inquirer is never registered by the software as an inquirer that can or cannot receive the address. Claim 34 is allowable for similar reasons.

Claim 18 depends from Claim 8 and recites that “wherein the disclosure judging means refuses to disclose the address to the inquirer when a response to a confirmation requested by the confirming means is not obtained from the registrant before a predetermined deadline.” Applicant’s specification describes that if “the changer 3 selects nothing within a predetermined period, an e-mail shown in FIG. 29 is transmitted, the inquiry is refused, and the processing is completed (steps S34 and S35). [0155] of 2002/0052971. Lee does not disclose a means for automatically refusing to disclose the new address to the inquirer if the registrant does not respond to the confirmation request within a specified time, and therefore does not anticipate Claim 18. Claim 35 is allowable for similar reasons.

CLAIM 23, 24, 40, and 41:

Claim 23 depends from Claim 8, and recites, “an inquiry instructing means, stored in the storage medium and started based on the return of an electronic mail because its destination is unknown, for instructing the computer system to inquire of the system for making the inquiry about the address about an electronic mail address of an addressee of the electronic mail.” Lee does not disclose an inquiry instructing means or the equivalent thereof. The Applicant kindly requests the Examiner identify which elements in Lee correspond to the inquiry instructing means.

Similarly in Claim 40, Lee does not disclose the step of “of making an inquiry about the address based on the return of an electronic mail sent from the inquirer to the registrant because its destination is unknown.”

Claim 24 is dependant on Claim 8, and also recites, “an inquiry instructing means, stored in the storage medium and started based on the impossibility of display of a home page because its destination is unknown, for instructing the computer system to inquire of the system for making the inquiry, about the address about an address of the home page.” Lee does not disclose an inquiry instructing means or the equivalent thereof. The Applicant kindly requests the Examiner identify which elements in Lee correspond to the inquiry instructing means.

Similarly in Claim 41, Lee does not disclose the step of “making an inquiry about the home page address of the registrant based on the refusal of a request for the display of a home page transmitted from the inquirer to the registrant because its destination is unknown..”

CONCLUSION

In making the arguments above Applicant has used the Examiner’s interpretation of the claim term “old address” for sake of argument only. Applicant does not concede that the claimed “old address” is the “Switchboard address” in Lee.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is believed that the claims in this application are now in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
DANN DORFMAN HERRELL AND SKILLMAN
A Professional Corporation
Attorneys for Applicants

/Niels Haun/
Niels Haun, PTO Registration No. 48488

Phone (215) 563 4100
Fax (215) 563 4044
e-mail: nhaun@ddhs.com